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# DREAMFALL: The Fleeting-ness of Memory

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*Virginia Commonwealth University*

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**Dreamfall**

The Fleeting-ness of Memory

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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## Abstract

### **DREAMFALL: The Fleeting-ness of Memory**

By Hon Eui Chen, MFA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2010.

Major Directors:

Gregory Volk

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My work seeks to simulate the impermanence of memory, through the creation of structures and images that translate the mind's formless but living past into physical material and sensation. The need to search for the missing six years of my childhood memories in Thailand has been the driving force behind the works, along with the lingering emotions of emptiness and unfulfillment. I create multimedia installations with materials, such as plaster, pvc panels, acrylic, polycrylic and dura-lar, to structurally realize a subject as intangible and elusive as memory.

Issues of duality, identity, impermanence and memory are underlying themes for my thesis investigation. *Dreamfall* is a simulated, dream-like landscape where the pervading sense of solitude exists throughout the sparsity and whiteness of the installation. It is a place for contemplation and silence, a landscape of the past relived.

## Section I : Memory, White, and Impermanence

*“if dreaming really were a kind of truce  
(as people claim), a sheer repose of mind,  
why then if you should waken up abruptly,  
do you feel that something has been stolen from you?  
Why should it be so sad, the early morning?  
It robs us of an inconceivable gift,  
So intimate it is only knowable  
In a trance which the nightwatch gilds with dreams,  
Dreams that might very well be reflections,  
Fragments from the treasure-house of darkness,  
From the timeless sphere that does not have a name,  
And that the day distorts in its mirrors,  
Who will you be tonight in your dreamfall  
Into the dark, on the other side of the wall?”<sup>1</sup>*

-Jorge Luis Borges, *Dream*

### Memory and Blankness

I was a culturally displaced child--raised in Mississippi but born in a refugee camp on the border of Thailand to an immigrant Cambodian family of Chinese descent. I have no memories of the first six years of my life. Prior to graduate study, my work dealt exclusively with family history, specifically my mother's recount of her childhood in Communist China in the 1950's and her ordeal during the Pol Pot regime in war-torn Cambodia in the late 1970's. My current works are stripped of any direct allusion to family history, but issues of duality, identity, impermanence and memory remain underlying themes. The installation created for my thesis exhibition seeks to simulate the impermanence of memory, through the creation of structures and images that translate the mind's formless but living past into physical material and sensation.

<sup>1</sup>Borges, *Dream*, 1999, p. 241.



Figure 1. *Muyky:chapter 2*, multimedia installation, Skowhegan, 2007

According to Henri Bergson, two types of memory occur—one ‘imagines,’ the other ‘repeats.’

“The first conquered by effort, remains dependent upon our will; the second, entirely spontaneous, is as capricious in reproducing as it is faithful in preserving.”<sup>2</sup>

When I think of memory, I envision layers and layers of the past compressing themselves into a ghostlike illusion of what my life had been. Instead of the present shedding its skin, it’s more like the past surfacing into the cloak of the present, at times clear, at times so densely layered that it loses meaningful definition. With the passage of time, only the elusive memory remains, looping endlessly through a mental landscape of contemplation and solitude. Yet knowing that during moments of desperation, memory is sometimes falsely recognized as an authentic event; can I be sure that my memories are not just dreams of earnest wanting—imagined answers to fill the forgotten pages of my early life in Thailand? A huge part of my need to create, to be an artist, is the search for answers, but for what type I am not sure. Perhaps I seek connection to my homeland, to those six years of childhood when a significant part of my identity was formed?

Memory can seep into our dreams, creating an illusion of reality or fantasy. Through my work, I seek to explore the simulation of the mystery of memory, its fleeting sensations, and the murkiness of what is submerged or lost in the layers of time. What happens when a memory fades into nothingness? Does it become white, like blank pages of an unwritten book?

<sup>2</sup>Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 1988, p. 102.

## White as Absence

*“Why does it appeal with such power to the soul? Why is it at once the most meaning symbol of spiritual things, nay, the very veil of the Christian’s Deity; and yet should be as it is, the intensifying agent in things the most appalling to mankind. In essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible of absence of color; and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows- a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink?”*<sup>3</sup>

-Herman Melville, from *Moby Dick*

White is normally described as the absence of color. In Eastern culture, white is the symbol of mourning, the color of clothes that are worn at funerals, the image of ghosts that are trying to physically form themselves amongst human beings. Is it then the absence of life? In Western culture, white is the symbol of purity, of innocence, of goodness and of deity. Is it then the absence of all things tainted? The dual meaning of white resonates to the dual nature of my identity – East and West. It is a color that allows for all other colors to be possible, a blank landscape for creation to occur, for memories to form.

In ‘Drum,’ a 4’x4’x32” sculpture, white is the only color used. This sixteen-sided sculpture was inspired by the oil storage containers that are commonly seen throughout industrial states such as New Jersey, Maryland and Indiana. The top surface of the sculpture is milky white, layered with resin and water, reflecting its above surroundings, while the supporting sides are muted white, voluminous and humble. For this piece, I wanted white to remain anonymous, ambiguous, and mysterious, existing in a form devoid of any embellishments or distractions, like a blank memory, representative of my forgotten years in Thailand.

<sup>3</sup>Melville, *Moby Dick*, 1959, p. 225.



Figure 2. Mock installation of *Drum* sculpture, 2010.

The word white signifies silence for me. In Susan Sontag's 'The Aesthetics of Silence,' the pursuit of silence is the way for the artist to manifest spirituality. According to Sontag, "Spirituality = plans, terminologies, ideas of deportment aimed at resolving the painful structural contradictions inherent in the human situation, at the completion of human consciousness, at transcendence."<sup>4</sup> Throughout every era, artists have used white in their works to explore themes of contemplation, religion, mortality, race, etc. The German artist Wolfgang Laib creates work that incorporates natural elements, such as milk, marble, pollen, rice and beeswax, which reflect his profound interest in nature and organic process, as well as in Eastern and Western philosophies. His work *Milkstone* is created by pouring milk onto a slightly concaved marble stone.

<sup>4</sup>Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will*, 2002, c1969, p. 1.



Figure 3. Wolfgang Laib, *Milkstone*, 1992-1995, white marble, milk, 23.75x20.5x24.5 in.

Painter Robert Ryman has used primarily white paint on a square surface. He is identified with the movement of monochrome painting, minimalism, and conceptual art.

*“If I look at some white panels in my studio, I see the white – but I am not conscious of them being white. They react with the wood, the color, the light, and with the wall itself. They become something other than just the color white. That’s the way I think of it. It allows things to be done that ordinarily you couldn’t see.”<sup>5</sup>*

-Robert Ryman

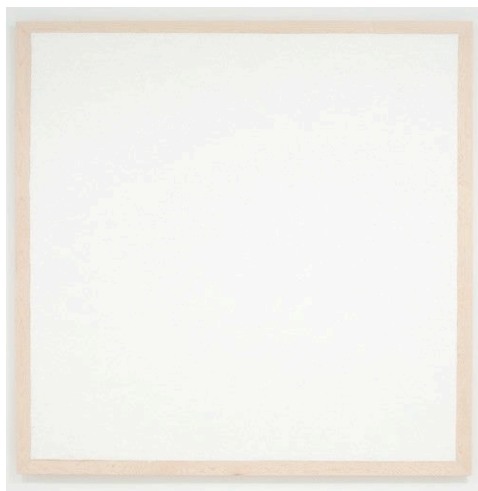


Figure 4. *No Titled Required*, oil on linen on panel, 2006



Figure 5. *Series #13 (White)*, oil on canvas, 2004

<sup>5</sup>Ryman, Art:21 Slideshow, PBS online.



Snow, pearl, antique white, ivory, chalk, milk white, lily, smoke, seashell, old lace, cream, linen, ghost white, beige, cornsilk, alabaster, paper, whitewash are names for the different shades of white paint.

Aryan, brave, purity, nobility, softness, emptiness, God, Death, knowledge, lack, snow, ice, heaven, Caucasian, peace, life, clean, air, light, clouds, frost, cotton, angels, weak, protagonist, winter, innocence are common connotations of white.

Roni Horn has been a major influence in the significant shift in my work from the previous semester, especially in paring down colors and incorporating photographs as works instead of references. Her minimalist, formal sculptures are conceptually addressing the themes of identity and location, experience and memory, sensuality and sexuality, unlike Minimalist and Post-Minimalist sculptors before her. Her drawings and sculptures usually come in pairs, speaking of her androgynous identity. Horn's installations in museums and galleries are usually sparse in appearance, but always carefully laid out, paradoxically simple and beautiful. She is heavily influenced by the landscape of Iceland and Emily Dickinson's poetry. She brings her experience of Iceland's landscape into a museum/gallery setting and generously gives a part of her experience, her inner world to us.

Horn's cast glass sculpture, *Opposite of White*, appears as a constructed pool of water, mutable and translucent with sides rough-edged from residues of the mold. Her water-like glass sculpture shifts in surface quality, depending on the change in light and the position of the viewer. It can be highly reflective, mirroring the viewer, or transparent, disappearing with its surrounding; its identity never fixed.

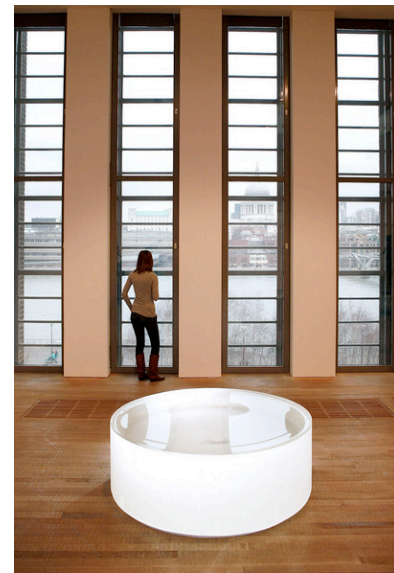


Figure 6. Roni Horn, *Opposite of White*, solid cast, colorless & clear glass with fire-polished sides, 2006.

White is expansive, yet can also suggest emptiness. It can be a generous color or the absence of color. It suggests a sense of calmness, while at the same time, a feeling of unease and incompleteness. White represents for me forgotten memories that still linger in the far distance, like a lighthouse in the dark night blinking its light silently and patiently for the right moment to emerge with clarity.

### Impermanence and Childhood Reflections

*“My homeland is the rhythm of a guitar, a few portraits, an old sword,  
the willow grove’s visible prayer as evening falls.  
Time is living me.*

.....

*My name is someone and anyone.*

*I walk slowly, like one who comes from so far away he doesn’t expect to arrive.”<sup>6</sup>*

- J. L. Borges, *Boast of Quietness*

Every night, my mother struck a match, took three to four incense sticks and lighted them up.

She placed each one in its respective incense holder, which was essentially a cup filled with rice.

One incense for the altar of our ancestors, one incense for the altar of Guanyin (Buddha), and

<sup>6</sup>Borges, *Boast of Quietness*, 1999, p. 43.

one incense for the altar of the Guard of the Underworld were lighted and left to burn, while offerings of food were placed in front of them. Freshly brewed tea was also offered. I sat patiently in the living room and waited for the incense to burn through till only the red stick was left so that I could devour the food offerings of steamed banana cake wrapped in banana leaf. The smell of burning incense permeated our house in Starkville, Mississippi, from the living room to our closet of clothes. As an adult, the smell of burning incense now recalls childhood days of waiting for the food offerings.

Burning incense has a life span of about an hour; it has a beginning and an end – it is impermanent. The core teaching of Buddhism is that life is transitory. In Tibetan Buddhism, colored sand mandalas are ritualistically created by monks and then destroyed once completed. The accompanying ceremonies and temporary experience of viewing symbolize the Buddhist doctrinal belief in the transitory nature of material life.



Figure 7. Tibetan Monks at work on a Sand Mandala.



Figure 8. Tibetan Sand Mandala.

Contemporary artist, Sanford Biggers used sand mandalas in his work with the piece *Prayer Rug* and *Creation/Dissipation*. Combining contemporary motifs and Hip-Hop elements, Biggers explores cultural and creative syncretism with themes of personal identity and cultural rituals. Similarly, my wall works incorporate patterns that allude to my cultural background and by default of the works being on a wall, instead of a canvas, they speak of the ephemeral nature of memory and time.



Figure 9. Sanford Biggers, *Prayer Rug*, 40'x20', 2005

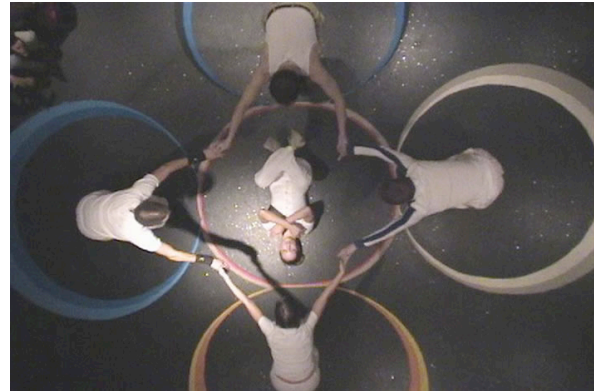
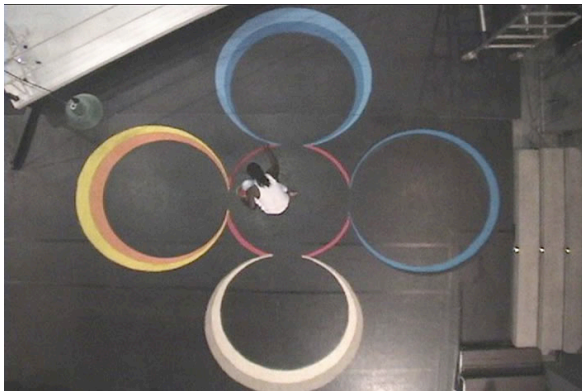






Figure 10. Sanford Biggers, *Creation/Dissipation*, 2002, performed at Trafo House of Contemporary Art at Budapest, Hungary.

Life is transitory. The nature of life is in a constant state of flux; it is ever evolving, ever-changing. Fleeting memories are triggered as I gaze out the window of the Amtrak train traveling from Virginia to New York. Static images of my childhood years intertwine with the adult I have become. The memory of my younger self running carelessly in our front yard in Starkville, playing kickball with my two older brothers becomes braided with the memory of my first experience with love in New York and the residual unrequited feelings. The train ride brings all the memories to surface, interwoven and at odds with each other; the transitory meeting of the present with the past. As I sit in coach class on Amtrak, as trees change to water, as water changes to industrial factories, the idea of impermanence is all the more apparent.

My parents, who are of Chinese descent, grew up in Cambodia. They met in their early twenties and married a few years later. During the period 1975-1979, the Pol Pot regime took power and made it their mission to bring Cambodia back to the year zero, the period of peasantry. In 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia, disrupting the Khmer Rouge regime, thus allowing everyone to escape. Some went back to their hometown, others, like my parents, fled to the border of Thailand, in hopes of attaining sponsorship to come to America. The refugee camp in Thailand, which no longer exists, was my birthplace. I am the youngest of five, and by the age of six,

came to America with my family and relocated in the small town of Starkville, Mississippi. The First Presbyterian Church sponsored our family, helped us find jobs, a home and learn English. In return, we were baptized as Christians, attending the service every Sunday. I always felt at odds with the Church's expectation for us to be good Christians. I wondered how my sponsors felt when they visited our home and saw Buddhist altars everywhere, from walls to the floor. I never thought much about my dual religions growing up--I knew the routine: Sunday go to church, once a week burn incense for Guanyin and my ancestors. My mom celebrated Lunar month, Chinese New Year, and Autumn festival with mounds and mounds of delicious stir-fry egg noodles, hot pot, egg rolls, roast duck, broiled pork, fruits and sweets as offerings for Buddha and our ancestors. After the incenses were burned, more so as a time-keeper for when we could eat, the food was available for everyone to indulge in.

My mother is incredibly superstitious; she made sure we did not shave or cut our hair on Chinese New Year's eve; we wore red strings around our neck, waist or wrist for good omens. Each stage of life, from childhood to adulthood, provides an opportunity for experiences that alter my perception of life. Childhood remains for me as a period of unresolved emotions, memories that still haunt me to this day.

In my installations, the impermanence of my wall works is like the ephemeral nature of memory. In *Alonealastaloved*, a 71 x 71 inch octagonal wall painting in my studio, fractals of triangular shapes in hues of brown, gray and pink explode in slow motion from a center of darkness. It is either the disintegration or emerging of lost experiences or dreams; it signifies my search to remember my childhood in Thailand embodied in an emotion of loss and solitude. The recreation of a wall work can never be in the same spirit as the original; just as a memory, or experience, can never be relived.

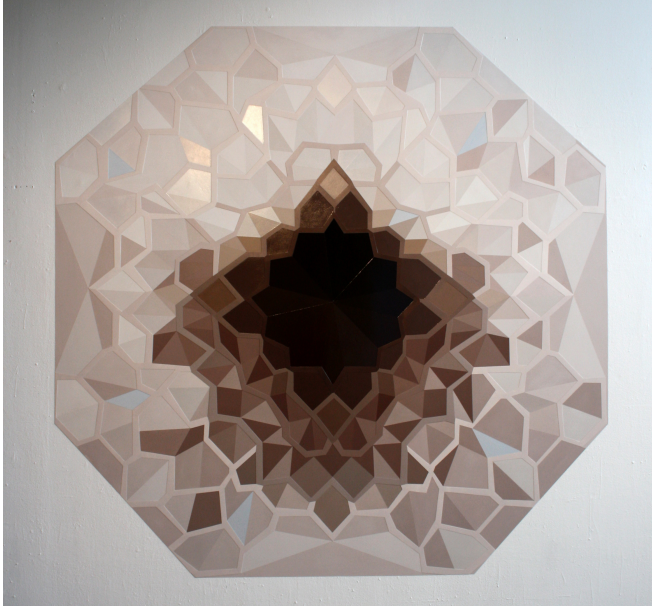


Figure 11. *Alonealastaloved*, plaster, acrylic on wall, 2009.

The wall work created for the thesis show is much more mutable in color, expansive and has subtler shifts in shadows than *Alonealastaloved*. It is the simulation of a cloudscape, utilizing the different subtle shades of white. The hard edge of geometric lines is no longer explored, but the ephemeral quality of wall works is still there, along with the on-site installation—creation/dissipation.

## Section II : Dreamfall Installation and Concept

### Photography as Lens for Internal Landscape

The use of photographs as references and ideas for paintings and sculptures has always been a part of my studio practice. It is only recently that I started to use photographs from my travels as an important component of my overall environmental installation. Images of places that are compressed into one image are devoid of figures, giving the sensation of haunting memories. The waterscape of Newport Beach is layered with four images of the location, until one final, compressed image is created, giving a slight sense of movement and narrative apparition (figures 12, 15).



Figure 12. *Water-Sky*, 50x37.5 in., 2010, cotton sateen.



Figure 13. *Snow-Water*, 50x37.5 in., 2010, cotton sateen.





Figure 14. *Snow-Land*, 50x37.5 in., 2010, cotton sateen.



Figure 15. *Water-Sky II*, 50x37.5 in., 2010, cotton sateen.

*Snow-Water* (fig. 13) is the displacement of two places—one is the waterscape from Newport Beach, RI, the other is the snowscape from Kingsport, TN. When memories overlap, they tend to interweave themselves together, giving a weird sensation that something is off or disjointed. Living in Mississippi as an Asian-American carried a lot of identity issues. Cultural displacement was certainly felt and the conflict of where I belong and what I am has been a persistent question. The generic feel of the above four photographs is radically different from previous referential images of my family used in my work; they are less specific, more present and open for the viewer to enter. I am not interested in whether the viewer knows where the photographs were taken, but more interested in evoking the sensation of what I saw through the windows of a train or car, the landscapes resulting from travel. Like memories that fade over time, the photographs, printed on soft cotton sateen, become the suggestions of what existed.

The expressive style of Sally Mann's gelatin silver prints is dramatic, haunting and emotionally captivating. Her later works, which shifted from photographing her children nude when they reached adolescence, focused on capturing the historic landscapes of rural Virginia. I am interested and emotionally drawn to the mysterious quality of her work and her use of the wet

collodion process to create images that are flawed and blemished, re-creating or simulating the historic battlefields.



Figure 16. Sally Mann, Untitled from the Elton John Aids Foundation Photo Portfolio, 1998, Gelatin Silver Print, 18x23in.



Figure 17. Sally Mann, #1 Scarred Tree, 1998, Gelatin Silver print, ed. of 10, 40x50in.



Figure 18. Sally Mann, *Untitled (VA #6, Nuclear Tree)*, 1993, Gelatin Silver Print, ed. of 10, 32.5x40.5in.

Sally Mann's moody landscape photographs have been influential in my decision to use photography as a means to recapture my past, as she is, in a way, capturing her cultural history and background.

I have also been influenced by Gabriel Orozco, an artist who uses photography to capture everyday objects encountered during his travels. His images of urban landscapes and humble objects twist conventional notions of reality. His piece *My Hands Are My Heart* is poetic and simple. The imprint of a beautiful, intimate gesture – the simple squeezing of a lump of clay to form the shape of a heart – exposes the necessary vulnerability of the artist.

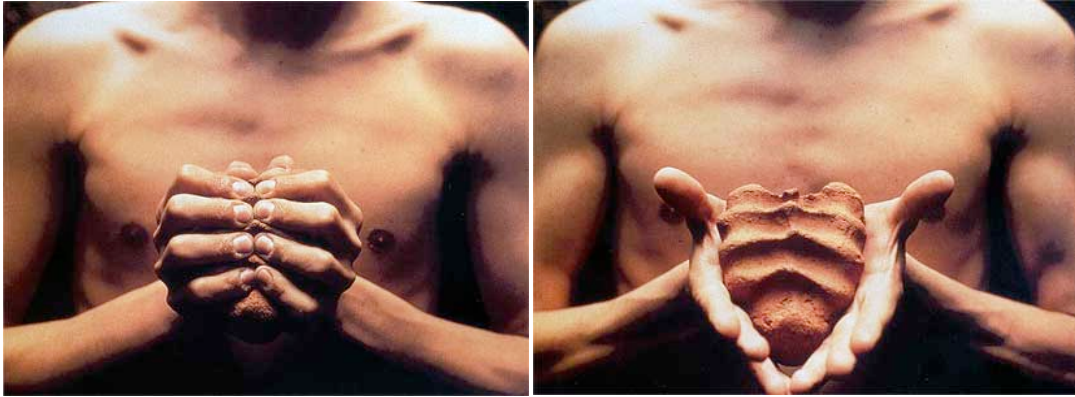


Figure 19. Gabriel Orozco, *My Hands Are My Heart*, 1991, two-part cibachrome, ed. of 5, 8.125x12.5in.

*"I don't take photographs thinking that they are going to be art. I take the photographs thinking that I need to keep at the moment, because I need to look at it afterwards. To be intimate you have to open yourself, to be fearless, to trust what is around you, animate and inanimate. Then you start to change the scale of things, of the public and private."*<sup>7</sup>

- Gabriel Orozco

My first experiences with photography were family related. I took family photos for the First Presbyterian Church yearbook and leisure pictures of family dinners or Chinese New Year celebrations. Photographs were a way of capturing moments of intimacy with my family and recording silly acts of childhood.

Photography-as-art became significant for me during my senior year of high school through the guidance of my art instructor, Andrew Lark. I experimented with taking pictures of my father tilling his land, layering his portrait over another exposure of the woods. Previously I mostly used photography as a tool for capturing images as references for painting, or for capturing moments with friends and family. It has recently gained more attention from me as an art form, as an addition to the sculptures and the wall works. I realize the absence of family pictures from my early childhood in Thailand contributes more to the distance I feel from my birthplace and my longing for it.

<sup>7</sup>Orozco, Art:21 Slideshow, PBS online.

The camera captures and stores experiences; it gives me evidence of who I was as a child, of how I changed as an adult, of my past loves and of important moments that impacted who I have become. According to Susan Sontag, “To collect photographs is to collect the world...In teaching us a new visual code, photographs alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe...the most grandiose result of the photographic enterprise is to give us the sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads—as an anthology of images...photographs really are experience captured, and the camera is the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Installation: Concept and Process**

Multimedia installation has long been a significant part of my interest in creating work - staging a simulated environment, or landscape, for the viewer to experience. *Dreamfall* is a multi-media installation that includes sculptures, wall work, and prints. The concept for the installation was to create a setting for the summoning of memories.

For the sculpture *Drum*, the initial idea was to include a reservoir of water and have sound vibrating underneath it to generate subtle movement of the surface. As the sculpture took form in the studio, I was forced to switch materials- from panels of MDF, which was not sufficiently water resistant – to panels of PVC. White is the natural color of the PVC, and I left the material alone and did not embellish it with other colors. While the top surface of *Drum* is reflective and glossy, the sides are matte and unassuming. Conceptually, I wanted the piece to appear as a weird, geometric white sculpture that appears to reflect but is impenetrable. *Drum* represents a clean slate, a blank memory that exists and is non-existent at the same time – its presence felt.

<sup>8</sup>Sontag, *On Photography*, 2001, c1977, p. 3.



The reason for using water to create the glossy top surface is that it vibrates ever so slightly with the surrounding noises. Throughout the process of making *Drum*, Rachel Whiteread's *Water Tower* was influential in its material, which is crystal clear resin, and its unassuming and familiar presence in the New York skyline.



Figure 20. Rachel Whiteread, *Water Tower*, 1998, resin and steel, 340.4x2243.8 cm, in collaboration with Public Art Fund, NY.

Whiteread's intention for the *Water Tower* was to create an ephemeral, ghost-like figure, a solitary and silent structure undisturbed by the street below, blending in with the sky itself. I wanted *Drum* to exist quietly in the thesis installation – to be affected by sounds around it but remain solid and impassable. It is like the blank memories that still stir to be remembered.

*Dreamfall* is an expansive wall work that is approximately 20 x 8 feet in scale. It is two and a half times the size of its original model in my studio. The material used is all plaster, tinted and

layered on the wall until a simulated cloudscape began to form. It is very different than the highly geometric, opaque colors of *Alonealastaloved*. With *Dreamfall*, I allowed myself to be loose and experimental. The slightly tinted plaster applied to the white gallery wall creates the setting for the dream-like environment of the installation. Subtle pink and blue clouds complement each other, accenting each other's role in the wall work. Its onsite installation was physically laborious, while at the same time contemplative and mentally satisfying.

As a counterpoint to the expansive scale of the wall work, I decided to insert two layered transparent cloud photographs inside a 3 x 4 inch rectangle cut into an opposite gallery wall. The contrast in size and material from one wall to the other highlights the surreal, dream-like quality of the environment the viewer enters, while at the same time offering a look into a small world behind the wall.

On the floor of the gallery space, three stone-like objects made of glass are placed throughout the room. They are titled *Lapis I*, *Lapis II* and *Lapis III*. My intention was for them to exist as thoughts, or punctuations. Their sand blasted surfaces are translucent, mysterious and foggy, and their forms are mirrored in the glossy black of the tiled floor.

On two large walls, two 50 x 37.50 inch digital prints on cotton sateen are hung on pvc quarter-rounds; the edges left to hang loosely, simulating a waterfall of sort. *Water-Sky* is made up of four layers of photographs from Newport Beach, Rhode Island; *Snow-Land* is made up of three layers of photographs from Kingsport, Tennessee. The final images are the compression of memories taken from travels. I experimented with methods for the presentation of the prints, initially stretching the fabric over pvc frames. The result carried too much reference to painting

and was too constricting. By allowing them to hang loosely, the edges of the prints move ever so slightly affected by the flow of air and the movement of viewers passing by in the gallery space.

All the works described above could exist independently, but joining them together created a multi-media environment that speaks of solitude, memory, and longing. A dialogue is created among the works, which is partially controlled through placement, but the tension and cohesion, along with the subtle meanings they have in interaction with each other is beyond my comprehension. I find that incredibly mysterious, surprising and engaging.



1.



2.





3.

Figure 21. Dreamfall installation (3 images), 2010, Anderson Gallery.

I am interested in how simulated environments take me back to past experiences or memories.

Early on in my studio practice, I was very influenced by Ann Hamilton's *Myein*, a multimedia installation that encompassed an entire building's interior at the 48<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale. The walls of the *Myein* installation were covered with large Braille dots, which were stained crimson by the red pigment powder that trickled down from the top edge of the wall. The bleeding walls speak of the emotional pain of slavery.



Figure 22. Ann Hamilton, Myein, 1999, US Pavilion.



Figure 23. Ann Hamilton, Myein, 1999, US Pavilion.

## The Notion of Solitude

Solitude is the default companion of travel. Memories, past or present, emerge spontaneously as I travel alone on Amtrak or in a car. Isolation, loneliness, confinement, emptiness, silence, withdrawal, reclusiveness, wilderness, privacy, peace and quiet, wasteland, desert and single are synonyms for the word ‘solitude.’ There is nothing more universally and humanly felt than the emotion of solitude, of aloneness. Felix Gonzalez-Torres’ work touches on this emotional content in his installation, ‘Untitled’ (Loverboy), which consists of two large windows that are curtained with blue sheer fabrics. The emptiness of the room, along with the flow of the fabrics succeeds in evoking the sensation of something lost.



Figure 24. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, “Untitled” (Loverboy), 1989, Blue sheer fabric/metal rod, Andrea Rosen Gallery



Figure 25. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, 'Untitled', 1993, Billboards, Andrea Rosen Gallery.

In my own work, I seek to create a setting, an environment that evokes emotions to universally engage with the viewers. The simulated environment of *Dreamfall* reflects my inner landscape of contemplation and solitude, just as the above images reflect Felix Gonzalez-Torres' sadness and loneliness following the death of his partner. My need to connect with my birthplace is possibly a consequence of my lack of emotional connection to my distant older siblings and father. The need to search for the missing six years of my childhood memories has been the driving force behind the works, along with lingering emotions of emptiness and unfulfillment. *Dreamfall* is a landscape of past that can be relived only in a simulated sense and only for a fleeting moment, like my search to reconnect or remember my childhood, my Indo-Chinese heritage.

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## Curriculum Vitae

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### E d u c a t i o n

- 2010** MFA, Painting, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
- 2007** Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine
- 2004** BFA, Painting, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), Savannah, Georgia
- 2002** Lacoste School of the Arts, Lacoste, France (semester abroad through SCAD)

### R e s i d e n c y

- 2010** Seven Below, Burlington, VT, June/July Session (forthcoming)
- 2008** Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT
- 2005** Yaddo artist colony in Saratoga Springs, NY

### E x h i b i t i o n   H i s t o r y

#### S o l o

- 2010** MFA Thesis Show, Anderson Gallery, Richmond, VA, May 7 – May 16.
- 2004** *Sixteen*, Starlander Gallery, Savannah, GA, September 1<sup>st</sup> to September 27<sup>th</sup>

#### G r o u p

- 2009** *Group Show*, 2<sup>nd</sup> year painters, Fab Gallery (VCU), Richmond, VA
- 2009** *MFA Candidacy Show*, Central National Bank, Richmond, VA, May 1<sup>st</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>
- 2009** *Blend*, Fab Gallery (VCU), Richmond, VA

- 2008**      *Fall Open Studio*, Alexander Hall Gallery, Savannah, GA, October 25<sup>th</sup>, Featured BFA alumni
- 2006**      *Shanghai Art Fair*, group show, Shanghai, China, November
- 2005**      *SCAD Alumni Show*, Alexander Hall Gallery, Savannah, GA, October to November  
Merit Award for *Rice Painting 2*
- 2004**      *The BFA Student Show*, Phoenix Gallery, Burlington, VT, May 21<sup>st</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup>
- 2004**      *Sense of Otherness*, Savannah Gallery, Atlanta, GA, June 1<sup>st</sup> to June 26<sup>th</sup>
- 2004**      *For the Good of Mankind*, group show, 302 West Victory, Savannah, GA
- 2004**      *Personal Inspirations*, senior show, Alexander Hall Gallery, Savannah, GA  
Merit Award for the work *1975-1979*
- 2003**      *Far From Home-Lacoste Exhibition*, Alexander Hall Gallery, Savannah, GA
- 2002**      *Lacoste School of the Arts Exposition*, Lacoste, France
- 2001**      *Chinese Bridge Exhibition*, Alexander Hall Gallery, Savannah, GA

## **A w a r d s**

- 2010**      Graduate Thesis Assistantship/Dissertation Fellowship (\$16,000)
- 2009**      Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship (VCU)
- 2008**      Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship (VCU)
- 2007**      Fellowship to attend Vermont Studio Center
- 2007**      Fellowship to attend Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture
- 2004**      Outstanding Achievement Award in the Painting Department at SCAD
- 2000**      A. Gregory Peeler (full-tuition) Scholarship to attend SCAD, Savannah, GA
- 2000**      Bill Gates Millennium Scholarship
- 2000**      Rose Evans Scholarship